

3 December 2013

RE: Common Core

I am a mother of five (third grade through high school senior) and until recently was fine with the way school had been going. I knew common core was being introduced this year and initially didn't think much of it. Although I'm an active member of our school's parent teacher organization and am at school regularly and spend many hours volunteering, I usually let the teachers do their job and trust their best judgment. And for all these years that technique has worked just fine—we communicate as needed personally, through email, etc. and I've felt completely confident with the curriculum taught.

Until this school year when my fourth grader started bringing home the strangest math worksheets I'd ever seen. Additionally, I've seen politically biased and morally offensive word problems. I've noticed a limited number of "approved websites" that are to be used in research. Some of the books to be used in high school are profane and vulgar with few role models and character building themes. Because my awareness has been piqued, I've started noticing all sorts of red flags, like these, pertaining to the way education is going and I'm VERY concerned.

I'm concerned because we weren't made aware of these changes. I never heard of our state government discussing the issue of adopting common core; it was simply implemented. This is a change affecting nearly every family here in Montana—we deserve a say.

I'm concerned because of the divisions it's causing in our homes. Parents are no longer familiar with the way math, for instance, is being taught. It's causing tension, stress, burn out, diminished enthusiasm for learning. My children love learning, and yet I can see that this is affecting that natural inclination in many children due to frustration and time spent needing to show the work on long, drawn out math problems, for instance. Some of the worksheets (even for the kindergarteners I've seen!) are so hard to figure out that we can't even direct a 6 year old at home! Not to mention that so much time is going to this kind of ridiculous "new" math, that there is little time for creative outlets like art or composing with various mediums. This is not "enhanced" education, this is stunting personal growth. And parents are having to pick up the pieces at home when their kids are dealing with headaches, acting out, depression, etc.

I'm concerned because the curriculum I'm seeing doesn't reflect the basic values Montanans espouse. There is a subtle shift and underlying sway to the wording, selections, and content. As I said, there is more of a liberal slant, more politicking, more adult situations, and more inappropriate phraseology.

I don't approve of the computer testing, the collection of data, the gathering of personal information, opinions, habits, etc. This is completely unnecessary, a waste of time when our kids could be learning material, and an invasion of privacy.

I see similarities between what is happening and what has happened before in history. A new idea sounds good, and yet it's implemented widely before the people at large have a chance to learn about it and decide for themselves whether it would be good for their families. It's being implemented even though other states have found many negatives and are wanting to pull out.

Please, please, please consider the future of our nation and how this will affect your own grandchildren. Please do not allow further implementation of common core—at the very least for now. Please do your own research and pay attention to those who HAVE. Listen to why people are upset and talking about it. This isn't just a passing program; this has the potential to cause major upheaval and to change our entire nation for the worse.

I have read a lot about educational reform, and I do agree that in some inner cities and other problem school districts, a program where the school is the city center may have some benefit. But for the majority of us, our families are our children's "city centers." There is no better environment to raise children than in a united family. Parents are intimately involved in their children's lives; no one knows them better or is more invested. Please don't take away our say in our children's educations. SLOW DOWN and study out this important and pivotal issue before you continue to embrace it. It doesn't feel right at all, and it isn't what our parents and families need or want.

Sincerely,



Caren McLane

Elder Grove School, Billings Montana

Education & Local Gov't Committee  
December 2, 2013

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